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# 03/09/2004 - Alternative Spring Break.pdf

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## **Alternative Spring Break 2004**

### **EIU Students/Employees and Community Members Lend Helping Hands**

*Mar-09-2004*

Teams of Eastern Illinois University students, faculty and staff are doing what they can to make a difference in other people's lives as they participate in this year's Alternative Spring Break.

The program, sponsored locally by Newman Catholic Center 's Student Volunteer Center , places teams in communities around the country to engage in community service and experiential learning. All trips involve hands-on service, education, reflection and cultural experiences.

Volunteers pay a portion of their own way - for most, \$130 - which includes transportation, site fees, housing, most meals and a t-shirt. The remainder of the cost is subsidized by the Newman Catholic Center.

This year, more than 100 participants are spending the week (March 14-20) - Eastern's spring break - at sites, including those that deal with the environment, homelessness, the elderly, urban and rural poor and inadequate housing.

A list of participants follows. This year's sites include:

- **St. Francis Inn (Philadelphia, Pa.):** This site provides a setting in which volunteers serve the inner city poor while being a part of a religious community. Volunteers witness their faith through prayer and a simple lifestyle. Work includes the preparation and serving of meals in a soup kitchen, interaction with the homeless and work in a thrift store.
- **Big Oak Girls Ranch (Springville, Ala.) and Big Oak Boys Ranch (Gadsden, Ala.):** More than 30 girls or boys (depending on the ranch) between the ages of six and 18 who have been abused, neglected and/or abandoned live at the ranches year-around in homes with other girls and boys and their house parents. This site allows volunteers the opportunity for friendship and fellowship with these girls and boys.
- **St. Francis of Assisi (Bessemer, Ala.):** Volunteers spend spring break helping out this poor parish in the south. Participants will spend time assisting with children in a Head Start program and helping with cleanup or improvement projects around the church and school.
- **Glenmary Farm (Vanceburg, Ky.):** Participants here will experience mission firsthand by reaching out to the local people of Appalachia. They will learn the Appalachian culture, the socio-economic conditions and the problems of the poor through discussion and by providing manual labor, home repair, visiting a health care center and working with the emotionally challenged.
- **Project Open Hand (Atlanta, Ga.):** Volunteers spend the week helping to prepare and deliver freshly cooked meals to those with AIDS or HIV-related illnesses or disabilities. More than 3,000 meals are served daily, seven days a week, to more than 550 men, women and children in the metropolitan area.
- **Habitat for Humanity: Collegiate Challenge (Blount County [Maryville], Tenn., and Americus, Ga.) :** Participants at this site put their faith into action by building and renovating homes with people sharing a common goal. Participants will learn and use construction skills while working with Habitat for Humanity and partner families.
- **El Puente de Esperanza (Queretaro, Mexico):** Participants here teach women sewing, child-rearing, cooking and other skills in preparation for the time when these women can move back to their homes and earn their living without displacing themselves and their children. Volunteers may teach, renovate homes, work with children and/or work on special projects.
- **Christian Appalachian Project (Lancaster, Ky.):** Participants at this site join more than 100 college students from across the country for annual CAP work. Volunteers work on home repair projects and interact with the people from the local community.
- **The Catholic Worker (New York, NY):** Volunteers here work at the birthplace of the Catholic Worker movement. Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin founded the Catholic Worker houses of hospitality in New York. St. Joseph House and Mary House can be seen as places of inspiration as individuals work with others in need. The week will be spent working with the homeless, working in a soup kitchen and learning about the Catholic Worker movement. Only those serious about living more in solidarity with the poor are accepted at this site.
- **St. Vincent's (Kansas City, Mo.):** This site cares for more than 350 inner city children ranging from six weeks to 12 years of age. Volunteers may spend their time working in the daycare, after-school program, food pantry and/or clothing outreach.
- **Nature Conservancy (Bristol, Fla. ):** Volunteers here work with the Nature Conservancy to plant trees, maintain state park campgrounds and preserve coastal regions. Work may include posting restriction signs for endangered birds, picking up garbage and trail maintenance. This site requires camping all week, with no indoor plumbing!

- **Hacienda Los Cerritos (Cadereyta Jimenez, Nuevo Leon, Mexico):** These volunteers travel to Mexico to work amongst the poor. Work includes painting a church, teaching and playing with children, working with Mothers' groups and planting trees.